

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 133531

70

ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /005 R

66605

DRAFTED BY: NEA/TUR: NMMURPHY

APPROVED BY: NEA/TUR: RSDILLON

----- 035009

R 091811Z JUL 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 133531

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE AND SECDEF INFO BONN, THE HAGUE,  
NATO, USNMR SHAPE, USDEL MC, USCINCEUR, CINCUSAFE, CINCUSAREUR,  
OSAFPCS EUR/ME RGN R/MAIN AB GER, NATO/SHAPE SPT GP (US) BEL  
FROM BRUSSELS JUL 06 REPEATED YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3762

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MARR, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN CUSTOMS TO BE APPLIED TO US APO MAIL AND  
PARCELS

1. SUMMARY: BELGIAN CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION HAS ISSUED  
REGULATIONS REQUIRING THAT ALL PRIVATE APO MAIL (AND PRIVATE  
MAIL OF ALL FOREIGN NATO FORCES) GO THROUGH CUSTOMS CONTROL.  
WHILE IN PRINCIPLE BELGIAN CUSTOMS REGULATIONS HAVE ALWAYS  
BEEN IN EFFECT, CONTROL OF APO OPERATIONS HAS NEVER BEEN  
EXERCISED. EMBASSY FILES REVEAL THE EXISTENCE OF NO US-BELGIAN  
AGREEMENT AUTHORIZING THE OPERATION OF THE APO IN BELGIUM ON  
ITS PRESENT SCALE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE SEE NO  
ALTERNATIVE TO COMPLYING WITH NEW REGULATIONS, BUT WE WOULD  
APPRECIATE ADDRESSEES' PROMPT COMMENTS AND VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY A  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 133531

COPY OF A DIRECTIVE DATED MAY 21, 1973, FROM THE MINISTRY OF

FINANCE TO THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, WITH THE REQUEST THAT IT BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF US FORCES IN BELGIUM NOT CONNECTED WITH SHAPE. COPY HAS ALSO BEEN OFFICIALLY DELIVERED TO USNMR SHAPE AND NMRS OF THE UK AND CANADA FOR THE BENEFIT OF NATIONAL FORCES ASSIGNED TO SHAPE. WE ASSUME ALL NATO COUNTRY EMBASSIES AND NMRS HAVE ALSO BEEN NOTIFIED.

3. THE MAJOR PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE NEW REGULATIONS WITH RESPECT TO US APO OPERATIONS IS TO REQUIRE THAT ALL UNOFFICIAL MAIL AND PARCELS, WHETHER IMPORTED OR EXPORTED, GO THROUGH CUSTOMS CONTROL AT THE ZAVENTEM CUSTOMS OFFICE AT BRUSSELS NATIONAL AIRPORT. (ALL US APO MAIL, WHETHER ARRIVING BY AIR OR BY TRUCK IS CURRENTLY DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO THE APO OFFICE AT ZAVENTEM AND THEN REDISTRIBUTED TO SHAPE, THE NATO/SHAPE SUPPORT GROUP (US), THE EMBASSY, ETC.) ORDINARY LETTERS AND OFFICIAL FORCES MAIL OR PACKAGES ARE EXEMPTED, BUT SIGNED CERTIFICATES MUST BE SUBMITTED TO CUSTOMS FOR THE LATTER. DUTY-FREE ENTRY WILL BE PERMITTED FOR MOST "OCCASIONAL" PACKAGES INTENDED FOR PERSONAL USE NOT EXCEEDING 1,250 BELGIAN FRANCS IN VALUE (CURRENTLY ABOUT \$36). ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, MEDICINES, PROCESSED TOBACCOS AND TOILET ARTICLES WILL BE SUBJECT TO DUTIES REGARDLESS OF VALUE. SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION IS TO BE REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF IMPORTS (E.G., FRESH FOODS, NARCOTICS AND WEAPONS), WHILE OTHERS WILL BE PROHIBITED (E.G., OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS AND "ABORTIVE DRUGS AND DEVICES"). FINALLY, IMPORT OR EXPORT LICENSES WILL BE REQUIRED FOR SHIPMENTS EXCEEDING 3,000 BELGIAN FRANCS IN VALUE (ABOUT \$87).

4. THE LOCAL APO OFFICE ADVISES US THAT THE ZAVENTEM CUSTOMS OFFICE HAS REQUESTED THAT THE FORMER EMPLOY A FLEMISH-SPEAKING TRANSLATOR SO THAT THE NEW DIRECTIVE CAN BE IMPLEMENTED SMOOTHLY. AS NOTED ABOVE, ALL INCOMING AND OUTGOING APO MAIL HAS UNTIL NOW PASSED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE APO OFFICE AND THE AMERICAN CARRIER. THE APO OFFICE HANDLES APPROXIMATELY 150,000 POUNDS OF MAIL A MONTH (INCOMING AND OUTGOING), AT LEAST HALF OF WHICH WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH CUSTOMS CONTROL UNDER THE NEW REGULATIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 133531

5. THE DIRECTIVE OF MAY 21 IS COMPATIBLE WITH BOTH THE NATO STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT OF 1951 (ARTICLE XI) AND THE BELGIUM/SHAPE AGREEMENT OF 1967 (ARTICLE 14), NEITHER OF WHICH PROVIDES FOR EXEMPTION FROM TAXES AND DUTIES ON PRIVATE MAIL. MOREOVER, EMBASSY FILES INDICATE THAT THERE IS NO US-BELGIAN BILATERAL AGREEMENT AUTHORIZING THE OPERATION OF THE APO ON ITS PRESENT SCALE. A 1963 AGREEMENT AUTHORIZED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APO TO SERVICE THE FLOBECQ COMMUNICATIONS

INSTALLATION, BUT IT DID NOT PROVIDE FOR EXEMPTION FROM TAXES OR DUTIES ON PRIVATE MAIL. OUR FILES INDICATE FURTHER THAT, AFTER INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS IN 1967 INVOLVING THE EMBASSY, SACEUR AND USCINCEUR, A DECISION WAS MADE NOT TO REQUEST NEW AUTHORITY FOR THE EXPANDED SERVICES REQUIRED BY THE MOVE OF NATO AND SHAPE TO BELGIUM.

6. GIVEN THE UNCERTAIN LEGAL STATUS OF THE PRESENT APO OPERATION, THE APPARENT LACK OF ANY LEGAL GROUNDS FOR CHALLENGING THE NEW DIRECTIVE, AND THE FACT THAT THE DIRECTIVE IS INTENDED TO APPLY TO THE POSTAL OPERATIONS OF ALL NATO COUNTRIES, WE SEE NO IMMEDIATE ALTERNATIVE TO COMPLYING. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY VIEWS AND COMMENTS INFO ADDRESSEES WISH TO SUBMIT. WASHINGTON GUIDANCE TO EMBASSY AND APPROPRIATE MILITARY COMMANDS REQUESTED. STRAUSSZ-HUPE

UNQUOTE RUSH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973STATE133531  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** NEA/TUR: NMMURPHY  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS DILLON  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730745/aaaabhgm.tel  
**Line Count:** 132  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ORIGIN NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 SEP 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <19-Sep-2001 by freemaal>; APPROVED <05-Nov-2001 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BELGIAN CUSTOMS TO BE APPLIED TO US APO MAIL AND PARCELS  
**TAGS:** MILI, MARR, BE  
**To:** ANKARA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005